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New Vegetable Breeder Begins Work at Cornell

by John Zakour

GENEVA, NY: Dr. Phillip D. Griffiths has joined Cornell University's department of Horticultural Sciences at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY. The newly appointed assistant professor will establish a vegetable breeding program to address the needs of the New York State crucifer industry. He will be working to breed new, high quality varieties of cauliflower, broccoli and cabbage that are disease and pest resistant.

"Phillip's experience in disease resistance breeding is a much needed component of the Station's vegetable breeding program," said department chair, Hugh Price. Griffiths' background is in genetics and molecular biology coupled with a working knowledge of conventional plant breeding. His experience working with the Florida tomato industry is considered a tremendous asset as he develops his own program working with cruciferous crops.

Griffiths is enthusiastic about his new position, "One exciting thing about working with crucifers is that they have such wide crossing potential, which makes them a crop that is easy to manipulate." He looks forward to the challenge of adapting his breeding methods to new vegetable crops and to implementing modern molecular techniques in a traditional breeding program. Griffiths anticipates helping the New York State vegetable industry in numerous ways, including the development of varieties that are resistant to black rot, and hopes to become a solid contributor to the New York State crucifer industry.



Dr. Philip Griffiths is the new plant breeder at Cornell University. He will concentrate on cruciferous crops.

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Griffiths, who is from Southeast Wales, received his Bachelor of Science in Genetics in 1990 from the Department of Genetics, Queen's Medical Center, University of Nottingham, U.K. His undergraduate research was on the linkage of the alcohol dehydrogenase enzymes to sexual selection in seaweed flies. He received his Master of Science in Plant Breeding in 1993 from the Department of Agronomy, University of Wales and the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research / Welsh Plant Breeding Station. His master's research focused on environmental and genotypic effects on endopolyploidy in the epidermal tissues of *Lolium perenne* and *L. multiflorum*. He received his Ph.D. in Horticultural Sciences in 1998 from the University of Florida at Gainesville, where his research centered on the introgression of tomato mottle virus (ToMoV) resistance genes from wild accessions of *Lycopersicon chilense*.

In the past, Griffiths has worked with the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center's tomato breeding program, where he performed research on the selection of ToMoV resistant breeding lines and the linkage of RAPD markers to tomato spotted wilt virus. Griffiths also worked for the University of Arizona's Department of Plant Sciences where he gained experience in alfalfa breeding.

NOTE TO EDITORS: If you need a hard copy of the photo, please contact Rob Way at 315-787-2357, or at rfw2@cornell.edu
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